

Dogeared Hate: Yilmaz Arslan's *Brudermord/Fratricide* (2005), a new type of *Heimat*film

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the *Heimat* (home) metaphor of the Pit Bull bitch in Yilmaz Arslan's *Brudermord/Fratricide* (2005), a film about Turkish migrants in Germany. Updating the genre for a world of fluid boundaries, this is a *Heimat*film of the German margin. Arslan's film self-reflexively posits transnational *Heimat* film as a possible bridge between "Others", as a means to facilitate conversations which might decrease the violence of the present dog eat dog world of the margin the film portrays.

Keywords: Kurdish/Turkish conflict; Heimat; immigration; transnational film

Zusammenfassung: Diese Arbeit analysiert die Heimatmetapher der Pitbullhündin in Yilmaz Arslans *Brudermord* (2005), ein Film, der von türkischen Migranten in Deutschland handelt und der das Filmgenre „Heimatfilm“ modernisiert, um die Welt der flüssigen Grenzen zu reflektieren. *Brudermord* ist ein Heimatfilm des deutschen Randbereichs und geht davon aus, dass der transnationale Heimatfilm als Mittel der Kluftüberbrückung zwischen Nichtgleichen wirken kann: Er könnte eine Annäherung durch Gespräche anregen, die vielleicht die Gewalt der gegenwärtigen Welt, in der jeder gegen jeden kämpft und in der viele wie Hunde leben und sterben, reduzieren könnte.

Stichwörter: Kurden-Konflikt, Heimat, Immigration, transnationaler Film

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Mir montazhen! *The world is montage! The world is chained.*

The ideas do not exist separately.

Viktor SHKLOVSKIJ (apud HUTTUNEN 2013: 164)

Sie ist ne Queen. Sie macht ja jeden platt.

(*Brudermord* 2006)

Heimat's a bitch², a Pit Bull bitch, at least according to Yilmaz Arslan's *Brudermord/Fratricide* (2005), a *Heimatfilm*³ of the German margins that focuses on the Turkish migrant experience. Updating the *Heimatfilm* genre for a Germany that must come to terms with its identity as land of immigrants, as part of a world of fluid boundaries, Arslan's film self-reflexively posits transnational film as a possible bridge between "Others", highlighting the importance of a montage that binds "enemies" in a conciliatory way, by pointing out their shared grief at the loss of *Heimat*. While not pollyanish, the film does promote film as a potential means of decreasing the violence of the present dog eat dog world of the margin the film portrays, arguing that shared *Heimweh* (homesickness) be collectively dealt with not by retreating into easy binaries, but by creating a "third space", a composite and nomadic image of *Heimat*. This essay positions the film within the context of the German *Heimat* discourse of the German *Kampfhund* (fighting dog) debate of the nineties⁴ as well as within the context of the Kurdish-Turkish tension to then focus on specific scenes in order to show how *Brudermord/Fratricide* argues against the fighting bitch model of *Heimat*.

² I mean no disrespect by using this term. The film itself uses the female dog as a metaphor for *Heimat*-- the German word for home/homeland/place of belonging. In addition, the film makes the connection between migrants and dogs in order to criticize their underdog status in Germany.

³ I argue that the film is a new type of *Heimatfilm*, a conservative, nostalgic genre infamously associated with the Third Reich. Traditional *Heimatfilme* are often set in an beautiful alpine or black forest setting in which traditional gender roles are maintained in a conservative idyll that seems threatened by the arrival of an outsider. These films were already produced in the thirties, but also were popular in the fifties and sixties. There were some *Heimatfilm* satires in the seventies. For more on *Heimatfilme*, see BLICKLE 2002, BOA and PALFREYMAN 2000.

The connection between "accented cinema" (NAFICY 2006:42) and *Heimat* films was noted by critics and cultural organizations, i.e., Berlin's *Heimat Kunst* (art) exhibit and performances in 2000 focused on artists with migrant backgrounds, and *The Goethe Institut* and InterNationes film series: *Getürkt: Heimatfilme aus Deutschland* (Turkified: Heimatfilms from Germany) (BERGHAHN 2006:145).

⁴ Much of this took place in the popular press, due to an increase in fighting dogs found on the streets and a number of attacks, particularly on children. The debate focused on whether the dogs themselves were inherently dangerous, or whether the owners were at fault. See BÖLSCHKE 2000, BRINKBÄUMER 2000, and DRESSLER 1999.

Brudermord/Fratricide focuses on the friendship that develops in Germany between two Kurds, Azad and Ibo, in the immigrant dormitory in which they live. After following his blood brother, pimp/former Kurdish freedom fighter Semo, to Germany, in order to send more money home to his destitute family in Turkey, Azad “adopts” the ten-year-old orphan Ibo as his little brother. Rejecting Semo’s argument that the only means which will allow a migrant in Germany to send sufficient funds home, is to engage in criminal activity, Azad and Ibo spend the day eking out an existence as barber and assistant in a dirty bathroom of a Turkish café in the *Deutschkei*. A chance encounter of Azad and Ibo with two second generation German Turkish brothers and their Pit Bull leads to a cycle of violence which ultimately results in the killing of the Kurdish brothers (Azad and Semo), the German Turkish brothers (Ahmet and Zeki), and Ahmet’s Pit Bull bitch. Only the non-blood related child Ibo survives, albeit barely-- he has been raped twice by Zeki and wants to die. In addition, a Kurdish nationalist group, led by the female Kurdish migrant Zilan, is involved in this fight between brothers, manipulating the narrative of dead bodies, to incite further violence and hatred between Turks and Kurds, as well as between Kurds and Germans, in the name of Kurdish freedom.

1 The Heimat Problem: a pit bull “bitch” to die for

Heimat, whether nation or neighborhood, as Benedict Anderson suggests, “is imagined as limited”, not as “coterminous with mankind”. “Conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (ANDERSON 1983: 7), it is this imagined brotherhood that results in fratricide. “Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (*ibidem*). The film does not shy away from showing the consequences of such “limited imaginings”. It also, however, suggests that a “horizontal comradeship” created through montage can enrich these imaginings, can reconnect enemies, reminding them of their “humankindness”.

In the “no man’s land” (*Brudermord* 2006) of a changing Germany, both the “majority” Germans (*die Mehrheitsdeutschen*) and the second generation German Turks

disrespect and turn against the first generation migrant (even their own parents, as in the case of Zeki and Ahmet) as a threat. Neither wish to be associated with the migrant underdog whom they fear will steal not only their German territory, but also their “German” identity. The German *Heimat* of the margins in this film is exposed as *Kampfhündin* (fighting dog bitch): not a welcoming, timeless, rural, traditional, peaceful *Heimat* of traditional *Heimatfilm*. Of course, *Heimat* in such films was always exclusive, always contained that bitch, but she was dressed up like a traditional female in *dirndl*. As “a social space in which the little animal is socialized to join humankind” (BOA and PALFREYMAN 2000: 44), if *Heimat* is a Pit Bull, it seems inevitable that the puppy will grow up and become a fighting dog as well.

Brudermord/Fratricide not only addresses the problems surrounding transnationalism and globalization in general, but also provides a case study through which to reflect on the rise of xenophobia in Germany following reunification, as well as on Germany’s role in the EU, in particular, the controversy surrounding the admission of Turkey as candidate member of the EU in 1999⁵. The film fits into the context of debates about the challenges of integration, the fear of terrorism in Germany from the Muslim minority since 9/11, and the change in the 2000 German citizenship law⁶, in which under certain conditions persons of migrant background born in Germany could choose to become German citizens. As HOWARD explains, in a Germany after the Cold War, it became harder to “justify, either morally or economically” the traditional “*jus sanguinis* component of German citizenship policy” (2008: 43), which enabled non-German speaking “ethnic Germans” to become German citizens while excluding German-speaking Turks who had been born and raised in Germany. After German reunification, the Pit Bull⁷, itself not recognized as a breed by the United Kennel Club and thus a fitting symbol for a *Heimat* no longer recognized by many as “truly” German, became short hand for how minority culture was destabilizing and threatening the German *Heimat*.

⁵ For the specifics surrounding the EU Turkey negotiations see JOHANNSON-NOGUÉS and JONASSON 2011.

⁶ For a good overview of the German Nationality Act since 1913, see HOWARD 2008.

⁷ The *Kampfhund* problem led to the question of which dog races were *Kampfhunde*, which not. A list of banned dog races—all “foreign” to Germany—was drawn up and became law in several *Ländern*. Interestingly, the list that was finally agreed upon did not contain the German shepherd, the Rottweiler, or the Doberman. For details see DRESSLER 1999.

Post-Cold War Germany was a chaotic “war-zone”: the public complained that it had become dangerous to walk on the street for fear of attack from a *Kampfhund*, literally by a ferocious canine or metaphorically by a defiant youth from the margins—whether Neo-Nazi or migrant. The *Kampfhund* became the image for criminality in Germany—German turned “Other” (into that which much of Germany wanted to distance itself from, namely its fascist past, or into the migrant “Other”). On the one hand, as dogs that had become associated with Neo-Nazis, the Pit Bull represented Germany as essentialized by many as a country always on a *Sonderweg* (special path), one destined to be a fascist *Heimat*. On the other hand, as dogs also associated with marginalized migrants, the Pit Bull represented that which the majority of Germans had tried to ignore and deny, but no longer could, namely, fear of being an *Einwanderungsland* (a country of immigrants) (HOWARD 2008: 43). The rise of the *Kampfhund* on German streets and in the German media mirrored Germany’s growing identity crisis.

Indeed, for those anxious about Germany’s role both geographically and politically in the center of the EU, the fear of a reunited Germany seemed warranted, especially in the wake of the xenophobic attacks at Solingen and Mölln; Neo-Nazi demonstrations; and the general increased prevalence of reported Pit Bull attacks. Internally, widespread dissatisfaction with the authorities’ inability to maintain order came to a head in 2000 with the death of six-year-old Volkan by Pit Bulls, Zeus and Gipsy⁸.

In a sense, Volkan’s murder was a case of fratricide, since both the victim and the dog owner, Ibrahim K., were German Turks. Ibrahim K. gave a name to Germany’s immigration “problem”, Germany’s failure at integrating its migrant communities, and Germany’s ultimate need to act after a decade of discussions. *Deutschland* and the *Deutschkei* united in outrage over the death of Volkan, who at one and the same time represented German children *per se* as well as a younger version of Ibrahim K., and as such in another context migrant children who were blamed for the embarrassing scores on the 2000 PISA study (FERTIG 2003). Arslan’s film is an explanation, though not a justification, of how a Volkan can turn into an Ibrahim K. on the streets of Germany.

⁸ The names of these dogs point to the “use” of the dogs themselves. “Zeus” declares superiority. At the same time, the name “Gipsy” (sic) points to homelessness as well as the ability to be at home anywhere. In addition, the term itself embodies racism.

By 2000 at the very latest, the *Kampfhund*, and specifically, the “uncontrollable” Pit Bull, had become the symbol of a German *Heimat* in trouble. She has not gone away: in 2014, there were 35 arson attacks of immigrant homes. (FAIOLA 2015: n.p.). In 2015, the *Heimat* bitch is baring her teeth as attested by the rise in xenophobia from Pegida (“Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West”) and the shift further to the right with the recent election (July 4, 2015) of Frauke Petry as leader of the conservative AfD (Alternative for Germany) political party and the resignation of co-founder Bernd Lucke, who cited the party’s xenophobia and Russian leanings, attests that immigration is still a divisive German issue (“Fractious 2015”: n.p.; “Germany's euroskeptic” 2015: n.p.; and WAGSTY 2015: n.p.). Furthermore, the violence breaking out among refugees seeking German asylum indicates also that it is not only Turkish-Kurdish hostility that crosses borders (HALL 2015: n.p. and “Close Quarters” 2015: n.p.). Thus while “Mama” Merkel’s popularity among Syrian and other refugees might be at an all time high, her immigration stance is creating division at home, and not just among the furthest right (OLTERMANN 2015: n.p.).

Indeed, as Germany struggles to accommodate the most recent immigrant crisis, the AfD party continues to grow in percentage points in the polls and in visibility on the streets. In an 8000 strong AfD gathering in Erfurt on October 8, 2015, the demonstrators demanded the removal of Merkel and the securing of German borders, ironically declaring five days after the 25 year anniversary of German reunification of “Wir sind ein Volk” (We are one people), that “Wir sind das Volk.” (We are the people.) “Volkans”, presumably, are not included (SAROVIC 2015: n.p.).

Similarly, co-leader of the left-wing pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party, Selahattin Demirtas, called the October 10, 2015 attack at a rally for Kurdish-Turkish peace (following attacks against Kurds in July in Sukur and Diyarbakir) in Ankara, which killed about 100⁹ people not “an attack on the unity of our country [...], but instead an attack of the state on the people [...]. You [the President of Turkey and his government supporters] are murderers. You have blood on your hands” (“*Proteste nach*” 2015: n.p.). At the same

⁹ As of this writing; many victims of the explosion are still in critical condition. In addition, different sources cite different death toll numbers, from 95 to 128.

time, he declared: “We won’t seek revenge. Violence will breed more violence. We’ll seek justice in the election on Nov. 1” (ALBAYRAK and PEKER 2015: n.p.). The Pit Bull is barking: one day after the attacks, the organizers of the peace rally blamed the Turkish President and government allies for “dragging the country into a civil war for political gain”, declaring a two-day strike. Mourners for the mostly Kurdish victims chanted “Murderer Erdogan!”, “Murderer police”, and “Murderer state” (ARANGO and YEGINSU 2015: n.p.). As victims still remain in critical condition and funerals of those killed in the dual explosions take place, Turkish politicians are manipulating “the worst terrorist attack in its [Turkey’s] modern history” (ALBAYRAK and PEKER 2015: n.p.) to gain support for themselves in the final campaign stretch until the November first elections (YEGINSU and ARANGO 2015: n.p.).

Long before Hungarian Prime Minister closed his country’s borders and declared the latest surge of migrants into Europe to be a “German problem” (FEHLER *et al.* 2015: n.p.), Arslan’s film showed that the Kurdish/Turkish conflict had migrated and had become an EU problem in general, and a German issue, specifically (CONRAD 2013: n.p.), since the majority of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe, that is a million or more Kurds, live in Germany (GUNTER 2000; BLEIKER 2015: n.p.). A decade after it was released, the film remains relevant for a world divided by 9/11, nationalisms, and one whose identity is significantly shaped by mass immigration. It urges every viewer to take responsibility for the dog eat dog world the film portrays.

Directed by a Kurd who has been living in Germany since he was eight years old, the film presents a Germany (and a Turkey) gone to the dogs, arguing that those with the most to lose are the children (KURZ 2007: n.p.) but that these victims do not need to grow up to be fighting dogs¹⁰. Set mostly in the *Deutschkei*¹¹ in Berlin, (ZIMMERMANN 2012: 226) the film contradicts former Federal Minister of the Interior of Germany (1998-2005) Otto Schily’s proclamation that “the [German] government will not allow Germany to become a playing field for political conflicts that do not belong on German soil” (*apud*

¹⁰ The film gives an alternative dog—the chalk dog of the film’s animated sequence in the German classroom. This dog welcomes the child Ibo, and acts as a bridge for him to imagine his old *Heimat*. For an analysis of this chalk dog sequence, see PLEASANT 2010.

¹¹ See KAYA 2007 for more on “German-Turkish Transnational Space.”

ECCARIUS-KELLY 2002: 93). *Brudermord/Fratricide* reveals how the “Turkish” minority in Germany is itself heterogeneous (ZIMMERMANN 2012: 227) and divided, much as it is divided from the Germany of the “majority.” Yet, while current German President Joachim Gauck contends that “there is no Germany identity without Auschwitz” (“Gauck zum” 2015: n.p.), he admits also that the instability of German identity makes it difficult “to grasp” (HILL 2014: n.p.). Despite Germany’s attempts at better integrating immigrants by officially at least since the 1990s recognizing itself as a country of immigrants and by styling itself as a “*Willkommenskultur*” (welcoming culture) (ABALI 2009: 1; HILL 2014), Arslan’s film portrays the tensions, difficulties, and dangers associated with trying to force national identities into permanent doghouses.

2 Pit bull, pit bull on the wall

In the following, I shall focus on the scene in Arslan’s film that sparks the cycle of violence. The problem arises in the *S-Bahn* (city train). An immigrant (the man speaks German with a strong accent) gets upset when entering the train and yells at Ahmet and Zeki for sitting in at the train door with a barking Pit Bull. The German Turks are sitting at the back of the *S-Bahn* car, controlling access to the train, through their intimidating dog. Ahmet yells back at the man with the accent that he should just get in at another door, which the man does. Ibo and Azad are standing close to the dog by the opposite *S-Bahn* door. Since Ibo is scared of the dog, Azad tells Ahmet in Turkish to tighten the dog’s leash, referring to Ahmet as “brother”. The dog’s owner who wears a t-shirt with the word “Pit Bull” printed on it (Pit Bull is a “scene” brand associated with Neo-Nazis and with gangs) pulls his dog closer, but takes offense at a Kurd calling him brother, telling him viciously in German “*Ich bin nicht dein Bruder, du arschloch, hast du’s kapiert?*” (I’m not your brother, you asshole, get it?) (*Brudermord* 2006). He then repeats this in Turkish, in case this Kurdish immigrant does not speak German. However, by denigrating Azad first in German, Ahmet is drawing a line between himself and the immigrant, is declaring his Germanness and thus his separation from and authority over the immigrant. Translating what he says into Turkish also emphasizes his feeling of superiority in both languages. As a

German, he feels that immigrants (his father, the first man who tried to enter the train, and then Azad) should not tell him what to do. As a Turk, he feels that a Kurd has no right to tell him what to do, either.

Azad does not respond verbally, but exits at the other end of the train car with Ibo at the next station. They must walk through the train car to get to the other door. The camera shows them walking through the “majority” Germans who sit deliberately ignoring what is going on at the back of the train. The film criticizes the “*Wegschaugesellschaft*” (the look away society) (“*Er machte*”, *Spiegel* 2000: 77), which tries to ignore what is happening at the margins (here the “back” of the train car). Azad and Zeki, still relegated to those margins, set themselves apart from newer “migrants”. Azad, however, had assumed that by sharing a Turkish background, Ahmet would see him as a brother¹². Although Ahmet does hold back his dog, thereby showing that he had not meant to scare the child, he overreacts and decides to put Azad “in his place” by swearing at him. Even Zeki (the same Zeki who will later become a child rapist in order to put the Kurds “in their place”) considers his brother’s behavior a bit extreme and tells him to stop.

It could have ended here. However, with the train door between him, the dog and the dog’s owner, Azad in turn curses the brothers out and dares them to get him. He leaps at the door as the dog leaps at it on the other side. Both German Turkish brothers also stick their faces to the train window, framing their dog. All four—the two brothers, who lean against the window threateningly with drawn out gun and open mouths; their angry and barking dog; and the angry and “barking” Azad, visually mimic and mirror each other. Azad could control his anger until Ibo was out of harm’s way. However, once the door is between them, he explodes, letting the brothers know that he is just as capable of fighting as they are, by challenging their proclaimed and performed superiority (“Come and get me, if you can”). Unfortunately, this will prove fatal to all the “fighting dogs” in this scene. Ahmet, Zeki, Azad and the dog do not survive. The loyal “puppy”, Ibo, however, stands off to the side and out of the frame while the camera focuses on Azad, the dog, Zeki, and Ahmet, whose Pit Bull shirt is clearly visible at this point.

¹² In Turkish, the term “brother” is a term of respect. It also indicates a feeling of belonging. ZIMMERMAN (2012) notes that it is used more than 40 times during the course of the film.

The German Turks in the film mark the German margins as their territory by threatening those weaker than they are, with fighting dogs, guns, and apparel associated with the marginal “scene”—both with neo Nazis¹³ and with gangs, namely the Pit Bull brand. Yet, despite driving around in a BMW, a symbol of success (and of Germany), this vehicle carries a fighting Pit Bull bitch in the trunk. The film opens the trunk and forces the viewer to look, even if s/he wants to look away.

3 Cannibal(l)istic: the pit bull model of Heimat

Unfortunately, this fight between Turks and Kurds has become synonymous with their identity in the no man’s land of the film. Although only words are exchanged on the train, those words have dire consequences. Azad comes upon Ahmet and his dog on the street, just as Azad has finished “distancing” himself from his brother Semo because of Semo’s pimp lifestyle. Yet, Semo runs after him, hoping that his brother will reconsider, since “You are the only family I have here” (*Brudermord* 2006). Azad knows there will be trouble from Ahmet, and hugs Semo so as not to be seen by Ahmet as Ahmet walks by. Ahmet does walk by, but the Pit Bull growls, perhaps smelling fear. Turning to see what his dog finds “offensive”, Ahmet recognizes Azad from the train, and then threatens to cut off Azad’s ear, as punishment for upsetting his dog. Semo in turn then stands up for his brother against the Turk “dog” who dares threaten Azad, only to be bitten by Ahmet’s actual dog. As a result, Semo stabs Ahmet, who might have survived the stabbing had his own dog not in turn turned on him and eaten Ahmet’s intestines while Ibo and Azad look on horrified; Semo has run away. The fact that the dog turned on his owner so calmly and without vicious intent makes the scene even more horrific. She simply took what was presented before her. As Ahmet screams in pain from the stab wound and tries to hold in his intestines, the dog calmly takes hold of them and pulls them to the street and begins to eat. Since in the earlier scene Ahmet by his shirt self-identified as a Pit Bull, this scene can be read as one Pit Bull eating another Pit Bull, or even Ahmet “eating” himself.

¹³ It does not seem to be a coincidence that the German policeman also wears a leather jacket and is bald.

According to DE ANDRADE, “Cannibalism alone unites us. Socially. Economically, Philosophically. The world’s single law” (1928: 39). Arslan’s film shows that the law of the transnational and postcolonial world is still that of cannibalism. It is a dog eat dog world, in which one takes what one can use from the “Other”, digests it, makes it one’s own, but rejects and vilifies the remainder as the distilment of “Otherness”, that which cannot be contained and thus accepted as self. If *Heimat* is a fighting bitch that must attack in order to exist, then she will always be a place of dogfights to the death. It is the law of cannibalism in the guise of nationalism, in the guise of transnationalism, in which the other is “feminized”, in which the “Other” becomes the bleeding body contaminating the *Heimat*, whether that *Heimat* is a street, a neighborhood, a city, or a nation. LINKE writes of “subaltern bodies”, which German political culture has manipulated into “racial constructs and potential sites of domination [...] where violence defines a new corporal topography, linked to the murderous elimination of refugees and immigrants” (1997: 559). *Brudermord/Fratricide* reveals that it is not only the German “political culture” that is guilty of this, but also the Turkish and the Kurdish political cultures as well. Both the Turkish Germans and the Kurdish nationalists call the other “filthy” beasts, disrespecting and abusing each other as Semo disrespects and abuses “his” sex workers. Thus both the majority Germans, the Turkish Germans and the Kurdish nationalists in the film turn each other into and are themselves *Heimat* “bitches”. However, any fighting dog can be made to bleed, so any *Heimat* fighting dog has the potential of becoming the bleeding, “feminized” “other” that must be cannibalized.

While the actual dog in the film was just being a dog (smelling blood/food and proceeding to eat it), the actions of the *Heimat* “bitches” are portrayed as unnatural. In some sense the Pit Bull just mirrored Ahmet’s own calm turning on his fellow margin inhabitant—which is literalized in the film by having the actor walk past and then turn back when the dog starts barking. Just as the dog’s turning towards the smell of blood led to the escalation which killed the bleeding Ahmet, Zeki’s turning towards revenge, first by beating Azad, leads to further fury and violence: to raping Ibo twice, to having Semo killed in jail, to having Semo’s intestines smuggled out of jail in order to feed them to the same dog which ate his brother’s intestines. Once the dog has digested these intestines and literally turned Semo into turds, i.e., that which Zeki takes him for, Zeki, his face contorted

in rage, shoots the dog in the head. Zeki's "mad dog" face is later mirrored by Azad's "mad dog" face, as he cuts off Zeki's ear after slicing him through the neck, another "sacrifice" to the tyrant revenge.

Zeki's montage if you will, his assembling of images, does not lead to what EISENSTEIN declared was the purpose of montage, namely "a 'tertium quid' (third thing) that makes the whole greater than the sum of its individual parts" (*apud* JOHNSON 2013, n.p.); his "film" creates a chain between the body of his brother, Ahmet with knife scar and lacking intestines, and the body of his brother's stabber, Semo. To make sense of his brother's death, Zeki turns Semo's body into the mirror image of Ahmet's, complete with knife scar and minus part of his intestines. Indeed, both Ahmet and Semo are literally eaten by the Pit Bull; Zeki and Azad metaphorically. Zeki and Zilan see only the "dirty" "Other", to whom they are handcuffed in hate, and it is that "Other" which gives them a sense of identity; the film as a whole, however, highlights the similarities of Ahmet's and Semo's existence at the margin of German society, and how each marked his territory and demanded "respect" by instilling fear and abusing those weaker than him. While sympathetic to a point in terms of understanding why they might have thought that turning into a Pit Bull was the only way to hold onto a place in the margin, the film does not come to their fatalistic conclusion that "the world is chained" (SHKLOVSKIJ *apud* HUTTUNEN 2013: 164) to the Pit Bull model of *Heimat*.

4 Language links: traces of "between" beyond *Multikulti*

The film contends that and models how montage bridges can function as temporary tranquilizers to the madness, even if realistically not a rabies antidote; instead of replicating *ad nauseum* the "us" vs. "them" chain links, montage can be used to create "a third thing" out of the seeming unescapable dichotomy. The film reflects what was bluntly stated by Angela Merkel's infamous and misunderstood comment "*Multikulti ist gescheitert*" (Multikulti has failed) ("*Integration*" 2010: n.p.). Like Merkel, the film does not conclude that multiculturalism itself is doomed to failure, only the naïve belief that immigration will not change Germany's (or any country's) core identity. In a Germany that changes to

reflect her multicultural inhabitants, the motto for the online *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge Integrationsportal* website “*von einander lernen – gemeinsam leben*”(learning from one another—living together) would be more than just an empty motto. Indeed, in such a Germany, *everyone*, every inhabitant of Germany, not just migrants who do not complete language courses, but everyone who is unwilling to participate in redefining the German *Heimat* as multicultural would be considered an “*Integrationsverweigerer*”¹⁴ (integration rejecter). *Brudermord* the film not the act does this already.

Integration means more than learning the language of the host country. CONFINO suggests seeing nationhood “from the perspective of collective memory, as a product of collective negotiation and exchange between the many memories that exist in a nation” (1993: 45). Although the film agrees that learning German is important and shows a German language class taught by a Turk as a potentially positive place, it does not replace Turkish and Kurdish with German. The memories of migrants, which are stored in a language other than German, have become an important part of Germany’s “collective memory”. Language is a means of *Heimat*—especially in a transnational world. As BLICKLE phrases it, “Heimat is in fact so intimately connected to its language that when all its property claims are stripped away, one may say [...] language is Heimat” (2002: 33). In the film, it is the Kurdish language that pulled a lost Ibo back from the completely unfamiliar. Indeed, in light of the decades’ long ban of Kurdish in Turkey (HASSANPOUR *et al.* 1996: 367), Germany represents for Kurdish migrants the freedom to speak in their own tongue, the freedom to feel at home. Yet, this *Heimat* is feared not only by the Turkish (and other) authorities who regard the Kurds as terrorists and a danger to the stability of the Turkish state and Turkish ethnic identity, but also by the German state, which fears it as just one of the languages migrants bring to Germany, just another non-German threat to the German identity, which itself is so bound in and to the German language.

Brudermord/Fratricide posits the German space “between cultures” (GÖKTÜRK 2004: 103) as a brutal margin in which racism and violence reign, as a place of exclusion, where *Heimat* is invoked to justify violence. Yet, the film’s voice-over and montage also posit this place of non-belonging, this exclusion from *Heimat*, as a possible bridge home,

¹⁴ See de Maiziere’s call for sanctions against *Integrationsverweigerer* (2010).

indeed, a place of home, via “transnational and trans ethnic imagination” (GÖKTÜRK 2004: 103). The film suggests that such a “trans ethnic imagination” possible in trans ethnic spaces such as a German migrant home or in a German language classroom for migrant children, could liberate the film’s characters from the dangerous but traditional *Heimat* and *Heimatfilm* binaries such as familiar/foreign; same/other; rural/urban; traditional/modern; timeless/ephemeral, by providing “a third space” (CERTEAU in EIGLER 2012: 42) of possibility. The film self-reflexively posits film and thus itself as a means of “liberation” from “territorially grounded notions of identity and belonging”, and “suggest[s] a way out of the restrictions of identity politics [...] into the complicated dynamics of inter-ethnic exchange” (GÖKTÜRK 2004: 106). While the protagonists fail to find positive Kurdish-German exchanges during the film, a positive Kurdish-Albanian communication occurs between Azad and his Albanian girlfriend, Mirka; significantly, neither in Albanian nor in Kurdish, but in German.

However, during most of the film, the German language is used also to maintain borders. The Turkish German brothers use German to denigrate Kurds and women, and to speak with the Pit Bull, thereby equating Kurds and women to dogs via language choice. Semo abuses “his” prostitutes, not only physically, but also by cursing them out in German. Additionally, the Kurdish nationalist group that meets in the immigrant home uses German to exclude non-Kurdish boys from their dormitory, in other words uses German to claim the room as Kurdish territory, at least for an hour¹⁵. Thus this German “linguistic space” between boyfriend and girlfriend in addition to the scene in the German classroom provide an alternative use for the German language, one that builds bridges rather than demarcates borders.

Despite its gruesomeness, and its gore, the film reveals that sometimes, a *Heimat* dog is just a non-fighting dog. During the film, the viewer sees the child Ibo’s imagined *Heimat* in an animated sequence sparked by the chalk dog on a classroom chalkboard. Ibo, at school for the first time in his life, observes both teacher and students. The teacher repeats “*Das ist ein Hund. Das ist eine Katze. Das ist ein Pferd. Das ist eine Ente*” (This is

¹⁵ This is contrasted to Mirka’s friend suggesting in accented German that the girls voluntarily leave the room in order to give Mirka and Azad some alone time. The girls share their space, let in the “Other”.

a dog. This is a cat. This is a horse. This is a duck). The students repeat the words after him. Ibo looks at the dog on the board. It wags its tail and “takes” him “home” to an imaginary Kurdish landscape, but one that the viewer recognizes from the *Newroz* myth sequences. Although the line of women of the *Newroz* myth are not there in person, the constantly flickering images remind of the flames of their torches and a choir of women’s voices sings an upbeat song in Kurdish, while a chalk Ibo first visits his grandfather and then rides a horse to his parents’ graves. Although his parents are represented by tombstones, Ibo speaks to them, and the father responds, happy that Ibo is at school, and voicing his parental concern about the swiftness of the horse. In this scene, both the chalk dog and the chalk horse are portrayed positively, despite the fact that the Turkish soldiers who killed Ibo’s parents arrived on horses and that Ibo has watched a dog eat its owner’s intestines. Unfortunately, this is the one and only time Ibo goes to school in Germany. Zeki appears at the window of the schoolroom, destroying its potential as a safe “German” place.

5 “Reel”istic togetherness

Although both the German language and “majority” Germans play only cameo roles in Arslan’s film, *Brudermord/Fratricide* clearly addresses a Western audience in the first word of the film—the German word *gewidmet*/dedicated to. The film is made for a diverse audience: for Kurdish speakers, for Turkish speakers, and for a Western audience of German, English, and French speakers, at least indicated by the German, English, and French subtitle options and by its initial run taking place in France. In this way, Arslan, who is also known as a Turkish filmmaker of the Turkish New Wave (MONCEAU 2001: 28) clarifies that his film is intended as a bridge between film traditions and between cultures. By making a film about the Turkish/Kurdish conflict, largely in Turkish and Kurdish, and filming scenes in Turkey, Arslan clearly places his film in the Turkish tradition of films about this conflict, both those filmed in the eighties and the contemporary filmic explorations of the topic (for specific films see MONCEAU 2001). Yet, by dedicating his film to the controversial Italian filmmaker Pasolini, whose films showed the Italian underworld, Arslan also positions his film in the European film tradition, albeit it at its

margins. By doing so he declares his intention of creating a controversial film, a film that quite likely will not be seen/accepted by “the majority” of filmgoers, a film at, of, and between margins.

Pasolini wrote: “It is only at our moment of death that our life, to that point undecipherable, ambiguous, suspended, acquires a meaning. Montage thus plays the same role in cinema as death does in life” (MOLITERNO 2002: n.p.). By dedicating the film to a director who valued montage as an important tool for making sense of film and reality, Arslan communicates with the viewer from the very beginning that s/he should pay attention to the montage in the film, that film itself is a transnational language, offering an alternative space and medium in which to make sense. It is through formal montage as well as story content that the Kurds, the German Turks, and the Germans are connected (less chained than shared) visually and through Ibo’s voice-over, in a composite story of homelessness.

It is fitting that a child offers the voice-over to this *Heimat*film, since as Bloch famously defined *Heimat* as: “*etwas, das allen in die Kindheit scheint und worin noch niemand war*” (apud BOA and PALFREYMAN 2000: 25) (something which appears to everyone during childhood but somewhere where no one has yet been). Ibo’s earnest and “wise” voice-over in addition to the film’s montage connect all “sides” of the violence with loss as well as with the *Heimat* myth of Kurdistan. This voice-over, and in particular Ibo’s version of the traditional Kurdish *Newroz* myth¹⁶, as well as the repeated appearance of the blind “seer”, offer nomadism¹⁷ as an alternative to a stationary, timeless *Heimat*, for whose soil one is willing to die¹⁸. *Heimat*, ideally, could be carried in one’s pocket—is a haven “in-between” the “in-between”. The film highlights both the despair and the potential of the “in-between”, the marginal, the liminal.

¹⁶ *Newroz* is the Kurdish New Year’s Festival, one that was banned in Turkey. For a discussion of how *Newroz* is important to Kurdish national identity, see AYDEN 2005. Zilan, the militant and savvy freedom fighter, uses the myth to stir up Kurdish nationalism and violence. Indeed, she recruits unsuspecting orphan children at the immigrant home. Her version of the myth divides; Ibo’s version finds that which connects the sides, in order to try to bridge gaps, not widen them. His version attempts to end nationalistic violence, hers to fan it. Indeed, she says: “What’s the use of having teeth if you don’t use them?”.

¹⁷ For more on the nomadism, see BOA and PALFREYMAN 2000, especially 203-212.

¹⁸ Before Azad leaves Turkey his father places a handful of soil into his pocket. This is also a prevalent metaphor for *Heimat*. See Ch.1 of BOA and PALFREYMAN 2000.

A significant example of the film's bridging is the beginning of the film, which starts with a Muslim cleansing ritual of a shroud-covered body. What is presented is a mourning family (ZIMMERMANN 2012), a family with which the audience can empathize before the audience is introduced to the unpleasantness of the character (Ahmet) that inhabited that dead body and the rage of his mourning brother. A child's diegetic voiceover delivers the following lines:

There are men who have left their homeland. They pursue a dream: prosperity and wealth and they work hard. They have worked hard. Often even in degrading conditions. As moths drawn to the light, many took the road to the Promised Land. And they endured all this only for one dream. When they reached their goal they realized they had left much of themselves behind. (*Brudermord* 2006)

The film then cuts to the sacrifice of a goat in a Turkish rural landscape, while the voice-over continues:

When they take everything from you, when you have nothing left except memory, then is the time to be reborn. The soul of my grandfather is old and his roots run deep. My soul is still young, and almost blind. And death is the only faithful companion on this earth. It sharpens our thirst for life. (*Brudermord* 2006)

If death is the only faithful companion, it also provides meaning at least according to Pasolini's definition. The film argues that memory is vital for the building of bridges—and in the film it is the “collective memory” as it were not just the boy Ibo's memories, but the memory of Azad and Semo's family sitting waiting in a barren landscape without a roof; the memory of a grieving father who wants to relieve his sadness by shooting the pit bull who killed his son; the memory of Semo's resignation and his realization that his own brother had betrayed him. As the voice-over says “my grandfather”, the film shows an old man and a little boy, allowing the viewer to make the connection between the voice-over and the boy, who will later be identified as Ibo. The voice-over pauses as the film continues to introduce the characters. A car is seen driving through the barren countryside carrying a letter full of dollars to Azad's poor homeless family. Azad's family is linked to the Turkish family of the beginning, since Azad's father is one of the “money-dreamers”, who believes that Germany is the Promised Land. Directly prior to the Pit Bull being introduced, Ibo's voice-over places blame on the fathers who are willing to sacrifice their sons, while

showing how Semo, the pimp, treats “his” Russian prostitutes as dogs, as Semo himself feels treated by Germans.

In exile, it didn’t make any difference how you helped your relative survive in the homeland. Whether you sold dead meat in a Doner kebab or living flesh in a hotel room, both were about bringing the money in. That is something the Europeans have learned: money doesn’t stink. And the sons of those money-dreamers will have to shoulder a heavy destiny. Their souls will swim in no man’s land. They will swim on the surface or drown. (*Brudermord* 2006)

At this, we see the BMW with the Turkish German brothers ride through the streets with aggressive rap music. The voice-over continues: “The only things they can hold on to are friends and family. For them, they would sacrifice anything”. The film presents three examples of sons and brothers who sacrifice everything in the name of *Heimat*, in the name of that brotherhood.

6 The blind filmmaker of comparative mir(ror)s

The film provides an Ibo stand-in in the imagined scene in which Azad, leaving home, is helped onto the truck that will drive him to Germany, namely, a young blind man. The voice-over introducing Ibo had already let the viewers know that his young soul is “almost blind”, rootless as it is. This blind man knows the outcome of Azad’s trip to Germany and tries to warn Azad: “You will lose a brother, but gain another. Go quickly to the country of your beloved” (*Brudermord* 2006). The film itself offers its diverse viewers this advice as well: Accept nomadism, if necessary. Roots are not bound any longer to the soil of one home, but like rhizomes travel horizontally, across boundaries. Home is not a place, but an active creation.

In case the viewer had forgotten the blind man’s advice, the film has him reappear in a different guise—as an old German blind man, who walks by as Ibo is teasing Azad about being in love. Azad stops walking and then asks Ibo to come to the police with him so that Zeki will go to jail. Ibo yells that he will not go with him, that he instead will grow up and kill Zeki.

At another crucial moment, the blind man appears again as he had been at the beginning of Azad's journey, directly before Azad chooses the path of revenge over the blind man's earlier suggestion. This time, the blind man says nothing; simply faces the viewer (and Azad), while Semo's funeral procession turned political rally led by militant Zilan has to move around him in the other direction. Silently, this blind man stands his ground against the crowd which presses on after Zilan, demanding revenge. Azad recognizes the blind man; stops for a moment; but chooses to follow the fighting dogs.

Why does Arslan use a blind man to represent the filmmaker of the new type of *Heimat*film? The blind man helping Azad onto the truck is an adult Ibo, the survivor turned filmmaker¹⁹, looking back to the beginning, imagining the beginning of Azad's story; he represents Ibo's insights into both their stories. The film marks certain moments with the blind man, to remind the viewer that both Azad and Ibo always had a choice, that what happened in Germany was not inevitable, was not fate. The adult Ibo knows this, too; in hindsight, he acknowledges how his own choices played a role in the death of his friend. The blind man is Ibo's "soul" which grew in Germany, is no longer "almost blind" but has learned from death, that "faithful companion", to "thirst for life", and thus to reject the *Kampfhund* model of *Heimat*. The blind filmmaker is not distracted by the blood on the streets which could chain him to the cycle of revenge; not blinded by rage, the blind filmmaker can see a "common" humanity, a common story of loss, and can thus form conciliatory bridges through montage. Of course, it is difficult for him to remember Zeki and Ahmet as positive figures. However, by beginning *in medias res*, by beginning "his" film with the dead body of Ahmet surrounded by Ahmet's mourning family, including his rapist Zeki, Ibo has been able to portray that family as human, as a family to which he can relate. And that is the first step in creating a bridge between enemies.

Unfortunately, not all bridges lead "home". Azad, who tries to end the violence only to become a murderer himself, is shot when he reaches the middle of a literal bridge. Yet,

¹⁹ When asked by the German teacher in Turkish what he wanted to be when he grew up, Ibo answered without hesitation: "I want to bring back the dead". In calling Ibo the filmmaker of *Brudermord*, I am not suggesting that Ibo represents the young Arslan. It is Ibo's film in as much as he gives the voice-over, and in that we see not only his nightmare but also his daydream.

before he dies, he makes sure that Ibo and Mirka are on their way “home”; Mirka, to her original *Heimat* with Ibo, who is on his way to a third.

In Arslan’s modern *Heimat*film, Mirka, whose name contains the Slavic word for “peace” and “world”, no longer represents a static home even though at the end of the film she is returning home to Albania. Mirka the character’s first appearance is as part of a multinational peaceful group of female smokers in a hallway (an ironic nod perhaps to the *Newroz* women holding torches?); her first act is literally to let Azad and Ibo into the immigrant home, by opening the door when they have to sneak into the girls’ side of the dormitory, because they have missed the curfew. She, too, is the one who wishes Azad and Ibo, a Happy Easter. The alternative to the Pit Bull model of *Heimat* resurrects the dead, not in order to encourage more sacrifices—Mirka walks out of the Easter service, away from the traditional narration, but in order to re-“write” the *Heimat* narrative, as Arslan’s *Heimat*film does.

Although the character Mirka has given Azad hope, she tells Azad that she brings him bad luck; indeed, as representative of *Heimat* according to the traditional narrative, “she” does. The Pit Bull model draws an apolitical Kurd despite his disavowal of nationalism into the cycle of the Kurdish/Turkish revenge whirlpool. However, as representative of an alternative non-biting and non-barking *Heimat* model, she tells him she has chosen to step out of the vicious circle—“*ich mache das nicht mehr mit*” (*Brudermord 2006*) “I’m not going to be part of this anymore”—by leaving Germany. She chooses to leave the “fighting pit”, neither in resignation nor in weakness, but as an active way of shaping her “home” by bringing Azad and Ibo with her, with a “comparative basis for developing a definition of Heimat” (BELL 2010: 191). Although, as in traditional *Heimat*films, her character, representing safety, belonging and hope, is not very developed, as a modern incarnation of *Heimat*, Mirka is no longer bound to a particular place, but can travel like the traditional *Heimat*film protagonist who leaves home in order to find it and then chooses to return home. Unlike the return at the end of a traditional *Heimat*film, her implied return is not a rejection of everything and everyone that is not “home”—but a return with the “Other”. Indeed, the modern *Heimat*film ends on the road; which is where *Heimat* is now, according to the film.

7 Memories of a non-Electra, non-Orestes

The road that led Ibo from Turkey to Germany began with the murder of his parents. In a flashback, in which Ibo relives his parents' murder by the Turkish military, it is his parents who provide him safety. His mother hugs him and his father tells him stories. When the Turkish military come, the father grabs his gun, but the mother silently tells him not to use the gun. The father leaves the gun behind and is shot dead as he exits his home. The horrified mother leaves her boy to go to her husband and is shot down next to him. The military men manipulate the scene, following the order to "[p]ut guns by the bodies and take a picture for the press" (*Brudermord* 2006). When the soldiers leave, Ibo crawls like a baby from the "home" that is now devoid of that which made it "home", to his parents' corpses, repeating "mother... father... mother... father" (*Brudermord* 2006). He lies between them, literally creating the bridge between the one who wanted peace (his mother) and his father (the man who usually would not leave home without a gun).

At the end of the film, it is not Ibo in between "peace" the mother and *Kampfthund* the father. Instead, at the back of the bus going to Albania, it is Azad, dying and then dead, in between Mirka (peace) and Ibo (potential *Kampfthund*) holding Azad's gift, the severed ear of his rapist. In a sense, Azad is the potential path the older Ibo might have taken, namely violence and revenge. Azad's last gift to Ibo is not the ear, but rather his reminding Ibo of a place of belonging, by telling him that he can already see a beautiful "paradise". He then dies from his gunshot wound to the back, eyes open, after which the film cuts to a white screen. The bridge he provides Ibo, however, literally with his dead body, is the bridge between violence/revenge (ear) and peace (the sleeping Mirka). The film leaves Ibo on a "bridge"—a literal road taking him from the traumatic war zone of his past in both Turkey and in Germany and the unknown awaiting him.

The last image of a dead Kurd is a stylized image recalling the stylized image of mourning with which the film opened. The white cloth that covers Ahmet is like the white screen that "covers" Azad. Neither whitewashes that which it covers, but instead offers a place for re-narration. To prevent the viewer from focusing only on the dead body, or from reading it unambiguously as that of a martyr drawn to the light of a religious paradise, the

film reminds the viewer of Ibo's imagined *Heimat*/paradise, by replaying the Ibo song of his animated dog sequence as the credits roll, seeming to celebrate the transnational collaboration that created the film. The white screen is a version of the blind filmmaker's stare if you will, or the blind man's hand held out to help us onto the "truck" on its way to the "promised land". The white screen dares the viewers to take responsibility for, to actively co-create a *Heimat*, an alternative place in which Ibo does not choose to become a Pit Bull. It dares the viewers to replace the easy reading of Azad's dead body as martyr with a new one, to see it as a bridge between the ear and the "undecipherable, ambiguous, suspended" (PASOLINI *apud* MOLITERNO 2002: n.p.) present that is the place of a living *Heimat*, a *Heimat* that is not a landscape of death, of set meanings.

In some respects, the film's last scene before the white screen is a return to the scene on the *S-Bahn* that sparked the violence: two "brothers" sit in the back of a moving vehicle with a *Heimat* cipher. The sleeping Mirka is not a Pit Bull; and yet the dog is there—in the form of the dying Azad who hands Ibo the ear as proof of revenge; in the form of a depressed Ibo from whom everything has been taken; and in the form of Mirka, who as a cipher for *Heimat* has declared to Azad that she brings him only bad luck. However, if the severed ear is a stand in for the Pit Bull, it no longer scares Ibo, nor does it give him a feeling of power. Although his lack of reaction to this horrifying gift could signal a loss of his sense of humanity, in short, that Ibo himself has become the Pit Bull, it is precisely his lack of reaction, his lack of satisfaction at the proof that his rapist is at least earless, if not lifeless, that seems also to offer an alternative reading. He does not "eat" the ear as it were, as the Pit Bull eats the intestines "offered" to her. He does not "incorporate" it. Ibo at the end of the film does not respond to the reminder of the paradise he imagined in the German classroom, either; too much has happened since. Listless, apathetic, passive, and unresponsive, he literally looks away from the ear in his hand and away from his friend who sees paradise, by falling asleep. Mirka also sleeps, oblivious, as her boyfriend bleeds to death. So much for an heroic martyrdom: dying for *Heimat* the film concludes is definitely not worth it. Neither the brother nor the "idea" for whom you are dying even notices.

Unlike Zilan, the film does not force unintended deaths into the narrative of martyrdom for a greater cause; it does not make heroes out of Pit Bull victims. Indeed, it clarifies that the Pit Bull version of *Heimat* will eat you; considers you replaceable, as Zilan does. She uses your teeth while you are alive and your dead body to fit the familiar narrative. The last scene then can be read as a rejection of that familiar narrative of the *Heimat* bitch, a rejection that opens the door to a different narrative, an open-ended one of the white screen.

8 Bridge open

The film as a whole models three possible reactions to the Pit Bull model of *Heimat*, to the *S-Bahn* scene: we can look away, retreat into denial, resignation or depression; we can fight back by becoming a mirror image of the dog, by intimidating, by hating back, and by demanding revenge; or we can actively co-create a new narrative, a new space by unchaining the Pit Bull, not in order to let her attack the “Other” but in order to unchain those chained to her. The first two “choices”/“reactions” view the world as chained to the “bitch”; the third at least can imagine a world even if only temporarily as unchained. The film leaves us with the choice of how to read its ambiguous ending, between a dead body and a happy song in the “no-man’s land” of the white screen. A “no-man’s land” does not need to be like the construction site in which Azad is beaten and Ibo is raped; it could be a non-exclusive place, one that “belongs” to no one, and as such a place of belonging. We can choose, like Ibo needed to choose.

Azad dies because he wanted it all—to be free from the *Heimat* bitch and have revenge. However, Ibo, unlike the other brothers in the film, chose to save himself, chose when he woke up to discover his brother dead not to turn the sleeping Mirka back into the Pit Bull. Ibo chose the white screen, not a child’s image of paradise, but the space of a work in progress. This place as the film shows is not a beautiful idyll, but a place of shared vulnerability.

While the blind filmmaker does not forget wrongs, indeed remembers them in gory detail, he moves on, does not turn his present into a timeless memorial for the past, into a

landscape of fixed ghosts. The Germany and the Turkey of the film are the blind filmmaker's "mindscape[s]" (DAYARATNE 2012: 311) through which the film rejects a "negative turning outward" as a means of creating *Heimat*—namely, the Pit Bull model—in favor of "a positive turning inward" (FINDLOW *apud* DAYARATNE 2012: 311) which through the film becomes a positive "turning outward" to engage the viewer. Ibo as filmmaker, brings back the dead, creates out of his memories and the collective memories he imagines of the others who populate his "film" a montage that attempts to humanize even those who act most inhumanely. By imagining Azad turning into the mirror image of Zeki, the adult Ibo tries to bridge the abyss between him and the dead Zeki, not in order to forgive and forget, but in order to prevent himself from becoming another mirror image of the Pit Bull²⁰. The blank screen at the end of the film is a mirror of sorts. The film encourages the viewer to look in, to recognize her own Pit Bull that overcompensates for vulnerability by posturing. Arslan, ironically, like Brene Brown, comes to the conclusion that in vulnerability lies the potential of imagination, innovation, and the possibility of meaningful connection (BROWN 2010). *Brudermord/Fratricide* holds out a screen, a space for all those suffering from *Heimweh* to feel vulnerable together and change the narrative.

"[C]ollective identity is reflected through material culture" (DAYARATNE 2012: 309) which "does create or partake in [its] making" [...] "rather than simply reflect it" (DAYARATNE 2012: 310)²¹. Like the traditional *Heimat*film, this film mourns the loss of a feeling of belonging. As such the genre is a genre of mourning. However, Arslan's updated *Heimat*film suggests also that the transnational *Heimat*film in a world full of displaced people can look forward as well as back since it is an active collective and evolving creation of a space of belonging in the present. It recognizes the power of the Pit Bull model of *Heimat*, acknowledges its pull, but argues that it is outdated in a world in flux. The white screen space, the space between "us" and "them", is an unfinished and undefined cinematic space. "Conceiving of the real and cinema as systems of signs, inhabited by the trace of other signs, Pasolini inscribes them in a process that eludes definition, and affirms

²⁰ To some extent, he, like Azad, has tried on all three options. The difference is, although he draws blood when punching a boy who mocks him, he does not kill him.

²¹ DAYARATNE is specifically discussing national identity and architecture. While this is not the place to argue whether or not national identity is the same as *Heimat*, overlaps exist between these examples of "a socially cohesive imagination" (DAYARATNE 2012: 310).

endless textuality” (BRUNO 1991: 33). This is the space of a never ending rewriting of the *Heimat* story.

If the filmmaker to whom Arslan dedicated *Brudermord/Fratricide* is correct and reality is “the ‘discourse of things’ that cinema re-narrates” (BRUNO 1991: 32), then the re-narrating of the updated *Heimat*film genre has the potential to re-narrate the dog eat dog world into a less canine one. Indeed, since “montage interrupts the continuum present of cinema and life, and changes it into the ‘historical present’ of film and death”, film is according to Pasolini “‘a devouring machine’, a ‘reality eater’ [...] positioned on the brink of death and history” (BRUNO 1991: 34). The “devouring machine” that is the *Heimat*film of the sort of Arslan’s *Brudermord/Fratricide* could take the place of the Pit Bull “devouring machine” and help create a new “reality”. Presently, however, as the rhetoric of the AfD, Pegida, the People’s Democratic Party, the PKK, the Justice and Development Party, the US Democratic and Republican parties, etc. and the international press attest, the Pit Bull model of *Heimat* is still narrating the status quo.

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